

Practices regarding secondhand smoking among Malay housewives in rural community in Jempol, Negeri Sembilan

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Secondhand smoking occurs in public and private spaces and it causes serious adverse health effects. The initiatives to establish smoke free policies in private spaces are more challenging as it is an area of autonomy. Thus, this study aims determine the knowledge, attitude and practices of a group of housewives in a Malay community who were secondhand smokers in the privacy of their own homes and their association with these women's socio demographic profiles.

Methods: A total of 114 housewives who lived with at least one smoker participated in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the characteristics of the respondents (age, level of education and income), their knowledge, attitude and practices towards secondhand smoking and also information about their secondhand smoking. Their practices were then categorized into 'appropriate' and 'not appropriate' practices. It was then tested for association with age, level of education, income, knowledge and attitude categories.

Results: The mean age of the respondents was 42.12 ± 11.13 years, 56.1% of them at least finished primary school and 90.4% had monthly household income of less than RM 2000. Exposure to secondhand smoking at home was 59.6%. Most were exposed to less than 10 cigarettes and less than 10 minutes per day (69.3% and 49.1%, respectively). A total 66.7% of the respondents had appropriate practice towards secondary smoking and this practice was significantly associated with the level of knowledge about secondary smoking ($P=0.034$).

Conclusion: National efforts to suppress smoking in private spaces such as homes and cars need to be enhanced. As knowledge is significantly associated with appropriate practice towards secondary smoking, more efforts should be made to increase and disseminate knowledge about the harmful effects of secondhand smoking especially to second hand smokers.

Keyword: Knowledge; Attitude; Practice; Secondary smoking; Housewife